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*Food that's in
when school is out!*



FEDERAL
PUBLICATION



Schools can help...

**The Summer
Food Service
Program
for Children**



Everyone Wins With Summer Food!

- Low-income children have nutritious meals and organized activities.
- Low-income parents stretch food dollars and have healthy recreation for their children.
- Food service workers have summer employment.
- The school receives Federal money to carry out the program.

What is the summer food program?

The Summer Food Service Program for Children is a federally funded program operated nationally by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and administered at the State level by a State agency. The agency reimburses sponsors (such as schools) for meals served at approved feeding sites in low-income areas to children 18 years and under.

How does the summer food program differ from the school lunch program?

If you have an academic summer school program, you should continue to participate in school lunch and breakfast. However, the summer food program is ideal if you sponsor an enrichment, recreational, or activities program over the summer. The summer food service reimbursement rate is higher than that for school lunch.

Who can sponsor the summer food program?

Units of local government, camps, private nonprofit organizations, and *schools*.

What is an approved feeding site?

A feeding site must be approved by the State agency as either an “open” or “enrolled” site.

An “open” site is one in which at least half the children in the area are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals.

An “enrolled” site is one in which at least half the children enrolled in the summer program are eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch.

Who can receive meals at an approved feeding site?

All children 18 years of age or under are eligible to receive free meals at an “open” site. Only enrolled children may eat at an “enrolled” site.

How does my school apply to be a program sponsor?

Contact the State agency and complete an application form supplied by the agency.



How are schools reimbursed for the meals served?

Forms documenting how many meals were served for the month must be submitted to the State agency. There is an administering and operating rate for each meal served. The sponsor will be reimbursed at that rate or for actual cost if less than the rate.

What type of meal service is required?

Meals must have the same meal components as school lunch and breakfast. Lunch and one other meal or snack may be served. Additional benefits are available for migrant sites.

Does my school prepare the meals?

A school may serve as a sponsor and either prepare its own meals or contract with a vendor. A school may also serve as a vendor for another sponsor and not administer or supervise a feeding site.



*Make Summer a Nutritious and Healthy
Experience for Lower Income Children*

Operate A Summer Food Program

Millions of children depend on free or reduced-price school lunches and breakfasts for 9 months out of the year.

For many of those children, summer vacation does not mean “fun in the sun” but rather increased risk of hunger and developmental decline.

As educators, you may know that children who miss school breakfast and lunch are more likely to be sick, absent or tardy, disruptive in class, and inattentive. They also score lower on achievement tests. Good nutrition is essential for learning in school.

Learning does not end when school lets out. Neither does the need for good nutrition—which is crucial for children to have safe and productive summers.

The summer food program provides an opportunity to continue a child's physical and social development while providing nutritious meals. The summer food program helps lower income children return to school ready to learn.

What's the next step?

Visit our website at:
www.summerfood.usda.gov

Then contact your appropriate State agency or USDA regional office.

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